

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5745

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY MASERU

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AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 JOHANNESBURG 0569

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, SF, PINR, PINS, PINT

SUBJECT: BLACK ATTITUDES: BLACK POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

REF: JOHANNESBURG A-26

1. SUMMARY: BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA HAVE NO GENUINE POLITICAL RIGHTS OR OUTLETS EXCEPT PARTIALLY IN THE HOMELANDS. AS A RESULT, THE STORY OF BLACK POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IS ONE OF FRUSTRATION, RIVALRY, FRACTIONALIZATION, AND ULTIMATELY IN SOME CASES, BANNING BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. BLACKS FACE TWO MAJOR DIFFICULTIES IN ORGANIZING POLITICALLY. ONE IS CONFIDENTIAL

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DETERMINED GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION TO ANY BLACK GROUPING WHICH COULD SERVE AS A BASIS FOR BLACK UNITY AND ACTION ON A NATIONAL LEVEL. THE OTHERS ARE THE MANY NATURAL DIVISIONS WITHIN THE BLACK POPULATION SOME OF WHICH THE GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO PERPETUATE UNDER ITS SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT POLICY. THESE INCLUDE TRIBAL AFFILIATION AND RIVALRY, RURAL VS. URBAN BACKGROUND, POLITICAL ORIENTATION, AND GENERATIONAL ATTITUDES.

2. THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO PREVENT BLACK GROUPS FROM BECOMING RALLYING POINTS AND THE INTRA MURAL DIVISIONS RESULT IN DISUNITY AND MISTRUST AMONG BLACKS, MANY OF WHOM SUSPECT RIVAL LEADERS TO BE INFORMERS OR IN SOME WAY IN THE HIRE OF THE GOVERNMENT OR ITS SECURITY FORCE. SO EFFECTIVE IS THE GOVERNMENT IN IDENTIFYING, HARASSING, DETAINING, AND BANNING LEADERS, THAT MISTRUST YIELDS TO CAUTIOUS RELUCTANCE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN POLITICS. NEVERTHELESS, BLACK GRIEVANCES AGAINST APARTHEID'S DISCRIMINATION AND OPPRESSION ARE SO DEEP AND UNIVERSAL THAT THE ANC (AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS) AND PAC, (PAN-AFRICANIST CONGRESS) WHEN BANNED, WERE SUCCEEDED BY THE BPC, SASO, AND SASM, WHICH, IN TURN AS NEW CIRCUMSTANCES (VIZ, THE SOWETO RIOTS) PRODUCED NEW LEADERS, WERE SUCCEEDED IN AT LEAST TEMPORARY INFLUENCE AND ATTENTION BY THE BPA AND SRC. NO ONE OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS HAS EVER HAD A LARGE MEMBERSHIP, SINCE MOST BLACKS CONTINUE TO BE PASSIVE OR ACTIVE IN POLITICAL TERMS, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY SYMPATHIZE WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF ONE GROUP OR ANOTHER. COORDINATION OF ACTION BETWEEN BLACKS AND OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS -- COLOREDS, INDIANS - HAS GENERALLY BEEN UNPRODUCTIVE AND AT BEST EFFECTIVE ONLY AT THE TOP, INTELLECTUAL LEVEL. END SUMMARY.

3. THE SEARCH FOR POLITICAL EXPRESSION BY SOUTH AFRICA'S BLACKS HAS BEEN A TORTUOUS ONE, PUNCTUATED BY HARASSMENT, DISSENSION, RIVALRY AND DISTRUST. NATURAL DIVISIONS LONG PRESENT WITHIN THE BLACK
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POPULATION, ENCOURAGED BY THE GOVERNMENT UNDER ITS SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT POLICY, INCLUDE (1) TRIBAL AND FACTIONAL (INTRA-TRIBAL) DIFFERENCES, (2) RURAL AND MIGRATORY BLACKS (GENERALLY MORE TRADITIONALIST AND LESS SOPHISTICATED) VS. SETTLED URBAN, BETTER EDUCATED BLACKS, (3) ESTABLISHMENT-ORIENTED BLACKS (UBC'S AND HOMELANDS GOVERNMENTS SUPPORTERS, FOR EXAMPLE) VS. POLITICAL ACTIVISTS AND YOUNG MILITANTS, (4) THE GENERATION GAP BETWEEN THOSE OLDER, MORE MODERATE BLACKS WHO ARE PRODUCTS OF MISSION SCHOOL EDUCATION AND WHO HOPE TO ACHIEVE CHANGE WITHIN THE SYSTEM AND THE RADICALIZED YOUTHS OF TODAY'S BANTU EDUCATION SYSTEM, INFERIOR AND RACIST IN CONCEPT, WHO EMBRACE CONFRONTATION AND OFTEN DREAM OF BRINGING THE WHOLE HOUSE DOWN, AND (5) EXTENT OF OUTSIDE INFLUENCES, ESPECIALLY THAT OF COMMUNIST INFILTRATION. THE FOREGOING DIFFERENCES HAVE COMBINED WITH THE SAG'S POLICY OF HARASSMENT TO FACTIONALIZE THE BLACK POWER MOVEMENT. THE ANC AND ITS OFFSHOOT, THE PAC, EVEN AFTER THEIR

BANNING IN 1960, CONTINUED FOR ALMOST ANOTHER
DECADE AS THE REPOSITORY FOR THE HOPES OF POLITICAL
ACTIVISTS. BLACKS STILL ORGANIZED INTO "CELLS" AND RECEIVED

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CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FROM THE EXILED LEADERSHIP IN
LOCALES LIKE LONDON OR TANZANIA. OVER TIME, HOWEVER,
A NEW GENERATION OF BLACK LEADERS EMERGED, EVEN
PRIOR TO THE MUCH PUBLICIZED "STUDENTS REVOLT" OF JUNE
1976, THAT HAS COME TO REGARD THE ANC AND PAC AS
INCREASINGLY ISOLATED FROM THE STRUGGLE, AND TO AN
EXTENT, IRRELEVANT TO THE CURRENT MOOD OF BLACK
PEOPLE. THIS NEW LEADERSHIP, WHILE STILL NOVICES IN THE
TOUGH, LIFE-OR-DEATH STRUGGLE OF A RESISTANCE MOVEMENT,
HAS TO BE REGARDED AS THE FUTURE OPPOSITION IN SOUTH
AFRICA. WHILE STILL LINKED TO THE ANC AND PAC IN SOME
RESPECTS, IT INCREASINGLY HAS BECOME CAPABLE OF INDEPENDENT
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THOUGHT AND SELF-DIRECTION.

4. OUT OF THE VACUUM LEFT BY THE BANNING OF THE ANC AND PAC EMERGED TWO GROUPS, ROUGHLY LABELED "ESTABLISHMENT" AND "RADICAL." THE ESTABLISHMENT GROUPS TEND TO BE OLDER ADULTS, PRODUCTS OF THE MISSIONARY SCHOOL SYSTEM, AND INCLINED TO HAVE ANC OR PAC BACKGROUNDS. THOUGH SELDOM ADVERTISED. POLITICAL GROUPS THAT FALL ROUGHLY INTO THIS CATEGORY ARE THE BLACK PARENTS ASSOCIATION (BPA), THE BLACK UNITY FRONT (BUF), AND INKATHA (ALTHOUGH INKATHA IS MORE OF AN ETHNIC (ZULU) ORGANIZATION).

A. THE BPA WAS FOUNDED IN THE WAKE OF SOWETO (JUNE 1976) RIOTS AS SUCCESSOR TO SOWETO PARENTS ASSOCIATION. IT WAS ORGANIZED WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF PROVIDING RELIEF TO VICTIMS OF THE RIOTS AND COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL MAJOR SOWETO ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING BPC, SASO, SRC, YMCA, HOUSEWIVES LEAGUE, HIGH SCHOOLS, BLACK WOMEN'S FEDERATION, SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. REPRESENTATIVES SELECTED DR. MANAS BUTHELEZI, LUTHERAN BISHOP, AS SPOKESMAN. IT IS AN UMBRELLA GROUP, LOOSELY ORGANIZED WITHOUT SPECIFIC POLITICAL PROGRAMS. IT SEES ITS ROLE AS THE "CONSCIENCE" OF BLACK COMMUNITY, AND AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN DISAFFECTED BLACKS AND SAG.

B. THE BLACK UNITY FRONT WAS LAUNCHED IN NOVEMBER OF 1976 BY CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI IN AN EFFORT TO CREATE A NATIONAL MOVEMENT TO COMPLEMENT HIS NATAL-BASED INKATHA. WHILE BUTHELEZI HAS MADE A DETERMINED EFFORT TO ATTRACT A WIDER SPECTRUM OF SUPPORT, INCLUDING A POSSIBLE LINK-UP WITH THE WHITE PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY, HE DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE HAD MUCH SUCCESS SO FAR IN ATTRACTING NON-ZULU URBAN BLACKS, ALTHOUGH A FEW HOMELAND LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF URBAN BANTU COUNCILS ARE SUPPORTING THE EFFORT. BUF ADVOCATES MULTIRACIAL POLITICAL COOPERATION AND HAS SHOWN ITSELF TO BE MODERATE IN OUTLOOK. BOTH ITS

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MAJOR STRENGTH AND MAJOR WEAKNESS IS RELIANCE ON INKATHA. INKATHA PROVIDES A STRONG ORGANIZATIONAL BASE AND COMMITTED MEMBERSHIP BUT ALSO GIVES BUF STRONG ETHNIC (ZULU) OVERTONES WHICH FRIGHTEN BLACKS OF OTHER TRIBES. (FOR GREATER DETAIL ON BUF SEE DURBAN A-01 OF JANUARY 19, 1977 AND DURBAN 30)

5. THE MORE RADICAL "SECOND GENERATION" POLITICAL

GROUPS SYMPATHIZE WITH THE EARLY FRUSTRATIONS OF THE ANC AND PAC, BUT GENERALLY HAVE LITTLE ELSE IN COMMON WITH THESE ORGANIZATIONS. GROUPS LIKE THE BLACK PEOPLE'S CONVENTION (BPC), THE SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS ORGANIZATION (SASO), THE SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS MOVEMENT (SASM) AND THE STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVES COUNCILS (SRC) REPRESENT A MILITANT LINE OF THOUGHT, LINKED THROUGH THE MUTUAL EMBRACE OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AS A SUPPORTIVE PHILOSOPHY.

A. SASO GREW OUT OF A DISENCHANTMENT AMONG BLACK UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WITH THE WHITE-DOMINATED NATIONAL UNION OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS (NUSAS) IN 1968. AS AN ORGANIZATION, IT FOUND A RECEPTIVE AUDIENCE AMONG BLACK STUDENTS, BEING THE FIRST POLITICAL GROUP TO ESPOUSE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AND TO REJECT WHITE COLLABORATION. WHILE NOT ALWAYS OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED IT IS REPRESENTED ON ALL BLACK CAMPUSES IN SOUTH AFRICA, AND ITS ACTIVITIES ARE UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY AND MANY OF ITS LEADERS DETAINED BY THE POLICE. ALONG WITH ITS COMPANION GROUP SASM (WHICH OPERATES ALONG THE SAME LINES AS SASO BUT IN HIGH SCHOOLS), IT GOES FAR TOWARDS IMPLANTING POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN BLACKS AT A FORMATIVE STAGE IN THEIR LIVES.

B. SRC, OF WHICH SOWETO'S WAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND WELL-KNOWN, IS CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH SASM/SASO BUT MORE ACTION-ORIENTED. THE SRC HAS BEEN A STANDARD
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ORGANIZATIONAL TECHNIQUE IN BLACK SCHOOLS, LINKING UP FREQUENTLY WITH SASM ON A NATIONAL LEVEL. THE SOWETO SRC (SSRC) ROSE TO GREATEST PROMINENCE DURING THE JUNE 1976 TOWNSHIP DISTURBANCES WHEN IT IGNITED RIOTS OVER USE OF AFRIKAANS IN SCHOOLS. IT TIED TOGETHER STUDENTS FROM ALL TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOLS AND ENABLED STUDENTS TO COORDINATE THEIR ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE SAG TOWNSHIP AUTHORITIES. THE SRC LEADERSHIP WAS THE MOST AGGRESSIVE IN PROMOTING RESISTENCE DURING THIS PERIOD AND MANY OF ITS LEADERS HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN DETAINED, HARASSED, OR DRIVEN INTO EXILE. CONTROL HAS PASSED TO A LOWER ECHELON OF LEADERSHIP WHICH, AT THIS POINT, IS APPARENTLY SUFFERING THE SAME FATE AS THE FIRST. THE STUDENTS, BEING UNDER PRESSURE BOTH FROM POLICE AND BLACK MODERATES, HAVE BECOME MORE CAUTIOUS IN THEIR BEHAVIOR.

C. BPC IS THE HEIR-APPARENT AMONG MILITANT BLACKS TO THE ANC/PAC AS THE BLACK NATIONALIST POLITICAL PARTY. ITS MEMBERSHIP IS ADULT AND MILITANT ALONG THE LINES OF SASO/SASM. WHILE STILL DEMONSTRATING SUPPORT FOR THE LEGACY OF

THE ANC/PAC, IT FEELS IT HAS LARGELY OUTGROWN THESE
"ORGANIZATIONS IN EXILE" AND STANDS ON ITS OWN TOW
FEET. IT DEFINES BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS AS ITS POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

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AND ADVOCATES "BLACK COMMUNALISM" (AN ECONOMICAL IDEAL SOME-
WHERE BETWEEN SOCIALISM AND CAPITALISM) AS ITS ECONOMIC PLATFORM.
IT IS A POLITICAL PARTY FOR BLACKS AND DOES NOT SEEK COLLABORA-
TION WITH WHITES. WHILE GROUPS LIKE THE SRC ENJOY THE LIMELIGHT
TEMPORARILY, THE BPC, IS MUCH MORE SEASONED IN ITS POLITICAL
OUTLOOK AND ACTION PROGRAM AND LIKELY TO OUTLAST AD HOC
GROUPS LIKE THE SRC.

6. THE ANC AND PAC WHILE STILL ACTIVE ARE NOT IN THE FOREFRONT
OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE COUNTRY. THE TWO
ORGANIZATIONS NOW SPEND MUCH OF THEIR TIME TRYING TO CONVINCE
GROUPS LIKE THE BPC AND THE SRC OF THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE
BLACK STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA. AT THE SAME TIME THEY
HAVE STEPPED UP EFFORTS TO RECRUIT DISAFFECTED
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STUDENTS TO TRAIN THEM FOR FUTURE OPERATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA. THEY STILL HAVE INFLUENCE AMONG OLDER BLACKS AND THEIR LEADERS IN SOUTH AFRICA (MANDELA AND SOBUKWE, RESPECTIVELY) COMMAND RESPECT IN MOST CIRCLES BUT THE YOUNGER BLACK SEEMS TO FEEL THAT THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP HAS PASSED TO HIS GENERATION AND THAT, IN POINTED REFERENCE TO THE EXILED ORGANIZATIONS, "STRENGTH COMES FROM WITHIN."

7. CONCLUSION: THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE SAG IS PREPARED TO ACCORD BLACKS ANY GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN THE GOVERNMENT NOR EVEN TO PERMIT FREE POLITICAL ASSOCIATION. ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS STEADILY REDUCING WAYS IN WHICH BLACKS CAN OPERATE POLITICALLY EXCEPT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT. AS A NATIONALIST MP RECENTLY PUT IT TO THE AMBASSADOR, "WE AFRIKANERS BELIEVE THAT THE UNITARY NATURE OF THE ECONOMY SHOULD BE MAINTAINED FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL RACES BUT POLITICALLY WE ARE ALL BETTER OFF IF WE GO OUR INDEPENDENT WAYS****

8. IN THE ABSENCE OF PRESSURES WITHIN THE WHITE COMMUNITY, AND MORE SPECIFICALLY AFRIKANERDOM, CAPABLE OF BRINGING ABOUT A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN SAG POLICY TOWARD THE NON-WHITE POPULATION GROUPS, THE FUTURE OUTLOOK FOR BLACK POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS IS GENERALLY PREDICTABLE:

(A) THE SAG UNDER PRESENT LEADERSHIP WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY GROUP CAPABLE OF OVERTLY MOBILIZING BLACK OPINION ON A NATIONAL LEVEL TO PRESS FOR MEANINGFUL CHANGE.

(B) AS LONG AS ORGANIZATIONS DO NOT POSE SUCH A THREAT, THEY WILL BE TOLERATED ALTHOUGH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MORE RADICAL (LIKE SASO, BPC AND THE SRC) WILL BE HARASSED AND IMPRISONED AS HAS ALREADY HAPPENED.

(C) TO SURVIVE IN ANY ACTIVE SENSE THE
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BLACK ORGANIZATIONS, IN ORDER TO BE RELEVANT, MAY EVENTUALLY HAVE TO GO UNDERGROUND AND SLUG IT OUT WITH A TOUGH AND DETERMINED SECURITY FORCE.

9. THE PATTERN IS ALREADY VISIBLE IN WHAT HAS OCCURRED SINCE THE EARLY BLOOM OF THE SOWETO RIOTS. THE INITIAL SUCCESS OF SRC ACTIVISTS WAS DUE IN MEASURE TO THE FACT THAT THESE WERE NEW ORGANIZATIONS WHICH

THE SAG HAD NOT HAD TIME TO INFILTRATE. ITS LEADERS WERE UNKNOWN TO THE SECURITY POLICE AND HENCE WERE ABLE TO MOVE AROUND AND COMMUNICATE WITH CERTAIN FREEDOM. THIS IS NOW CHANGING. THE SECURITY POLICE HAVE LARGELY ROLLED UP OR FORCED INTO EXILE THE FIRST ECHELONS OF THE SSR. THE ORGANIZATION HAS NOW HAD TO FALL BACK ON AN APPARENTLY WEAK, UNTESTED LEADERSHIP. WITH THE RESULT THAT THERE IS CONFUSION, INDECISION, AND INACTION.

10. FINALLY, LARGE NUMBERS OF STUDENTS REFUGEES HAVE BROUGHT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ANC/PAC ON THE ONE SIDE AND THE MILITANT SRC/SASO/BPC ON THE OTHER INTO SHARPER FOCUS. BOTH GROUPINGS HAVE MOVED TO CONSOLIDATE AND STRENGTHEN THEIR INFLUENCE AMONG REFUGEES, BEING INCREASINGLY AT DDS OVER OBJECTIVES AND TACTICS. THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE NEWER GROUPS CAN GAIN INTERNATIONAL STATUS BY OVERCOMING ANC AND PAC TRADITIONAL INFLUENCE IN NEIGHBORING AFRICAN STATES AND ELSEWHERE WILL GO FAR IN DETERMINING TO WHAT EXTENT THE SAG REGARDS THEM AS SERIOUS CHALLENGERS. ALSO, CHIEF BUTHELEZI APPARENTLY STILL THINKS THAT THE BUF CAN BE BUILT UP AND ITS CONSTITUENCIES ORGANIZED TO ENGAGE IN CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND PASSIVE RESISTANCE AS A LEVERAGE ON THE GOVERNMENT. HE MAY, HOWEVER, FALL BACK UPON INKATHA IF HE FEELS THE BUF IS NOT PROVING A SUCCESSFUL VEHICLE FOR HIS NATIONAL AMBITIONS. THAT HE HAS SOME WAY TO GO AND IS NOT REGARDED AS REPRESENTING ANY IMMEDIATE THREAT IS REFLECTED IN THE CONTINUED TOLERANCE BY THE SAG OF

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INKATHA AND THE BUF.
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